

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH
OF
GURDON SALTONSTALL HUBBARD

READ BEFORE THE
CHICAGO HISTORICAL SOCIETY
TUESDAY EVENING, APRIL 16, 1907

BY
HENRY E. HAMILTON

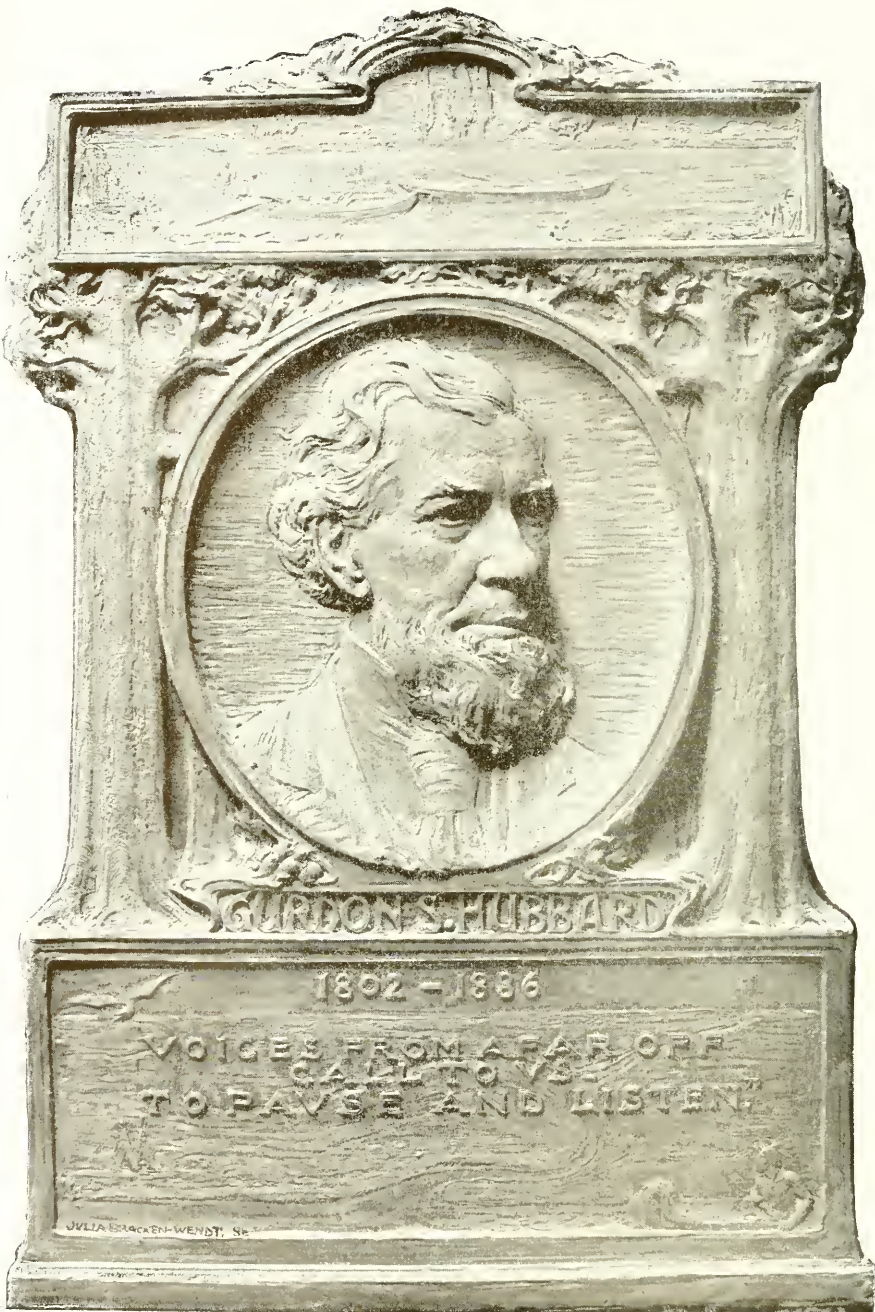
ON THE OCCASION
OF THE UNVEILING OF A BRONZE TABLET
IN MEMORY OF HER HUSBAND

BY
MARY ANN HUBBARD



CHICAGO
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GURDON S. HUBBARD

1892 - 1886

VOICES FROM AFAR OFF
CALL TO US
TO PAUSE AND LISTEN.

JULIA SLOCKEN-WENDT, SC.

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GURDON SALTONSTALL HUBBARD

MEMORIAL MEETING

INTRODUCTION BY PRESIDENT HEAD

A LONG time ago, a young man, born in Vermont, and less than seventeen years of age, landed from a canoe at a point on the banks of the Chicago River near the site of old Fort Dearborn, and where was a small trading-post for the purchase of furs from the Indians. No signs of what was to be, ultimately, one of the greatest commercial cities on the continent were yet visible. This young man, Gurdon S. Hubbard, was a clerk employed by the American Fur Company, whose profits laid the foundation of the colossal fortune of John Jacob Astor. Mr. Hubbard's exceptional ability, enterprise, and integrity soon commended him to his employer for promotion, and as the years went by, he visited the centers of the fur-collecting business in what are now known as the states of the Middle West, and also of a large part of Canada, having the general superintendence of the business of the company in this great region. The travels of Mr. Hubbard during this period had made him measurably familiar with the geography of the two great valleys of North America. To the east of Chicago lay the valley of the St. Lawrence River, draining the waters of the great lakes and their tributaries into the Atlantic Ocean. To the west of Chicago was the great Mississippi Valley, draining the waters of the greater portion of the region, extending from the Alleghany Mountains on the east to the Rocky Mountains on the west, into the Gulf of Mexico. Before the construction of highways upon the land, and in the days of the primitive people of North America, and of the early

settlers of these two great valleys, nearly all the business was done upon the various waterways. Long before Columbus set out from Palos, the Indians in the valley of the St. Lawrence, in their expeditions for trade with the Indians of the Mississippi Valley, met them at the Chicago River, where these two great valleys had their nearest point of meeting. As the white people commenced to settle in different parts of these great regions, they naturally met at the same point that had been selected for ages by the primitive peoples as their point for conference and trade. Mr. Hubbard's familiarity with the geography of these great regions brought to him early a vivid realization that the mouth of the Chicago River was the commercial centre of the future inland empire. He became interested early in the business of the little frontier village, after a time made it his home, and until his death in 1886 was an intelligent and much-honored citizen of the metropolis. Chicago never had a more loyal son. To the day of his death, he was interested in all matters for the promotion of the growth and development of the city, and was an active and efficient worker in all schemes for the upbuilding and improvement of the city's life.

We are fortunate in having with us this evening the nephew of Mrs. Gurdon S. Hubbard, who has, at her request, prepared a memorial paper which he will now read to us. His intimate acquaintance with Mr. Hubbard for the greater part of his life gives him a special qualification for this work. I have the pleasure of presenting to you Henry E. Hamilton.

Mr. Hamilton's paper was as follows:

The task which Mrs. Hubbard has assigned to me, that of presenting to this Society a bronze tablet in memory of her husband, is one I might well wish had been entrusted to abler hands.

The early life of Mr. Hubbard was filled with incidents of thrilling interest. Shortly after his death, a memorial volume, that I had the pleasure of preparing, was published for distribution among his friends. This little volume contained every incident of interest, with which his family was familiar, and from this

volume my paper of this evening is drawn. You, therefore, who are familiar with it, will hear nothing new or original. I have endeavored to show, more particularly, the thrilling and pathetic experiences through which he passed, as a boy, and to that end have selected those, that appeal to me most strongly. It has been my endeavor also, to present them as nearly as possible, in Mr. Hubbard's own language, thus making this paper in some respects an auto-biographical sketch.

The history of our country could not be written without recording the life and deeds of our New-England forefathers. From the landing of the Pilgrims to the war of the Revolution and down to the beginning of the nineteenth century, they were called upon to endure hardships and privations which we of the present day can not realize.

A God-fearing and a God-loving people, were these old New Englanders, patriotic, brave, and faithful. From their youth, they were familiar with perils and hardships. They hewed their way through the forests, established their homes in the wilderness, and became the advance guards of civilization and Christianity.

From such men and women, Gurdon Saltonstall Hubbard descended. He was born at Windsor, Vermont, August 22, 1802, and was the son of Elizar Hubbard and Abigail Sage, the daughter of Gen. Comfort Sage and Sarah Hamlin of Middletown, Conn. His grandfather, George Hubbard, was a captain in the war of the Revolution and his uncle, George, junior, was a drummer-boy, and drummed at the execution of Major André.

Mr. Hubbard's father, a lawyer by profession, about the year 1810, entered into some speculations that resulted disastrously, caused the loss of his property as well as his clients, and he decided to remove to Montreal, which he did in the spring of 1815. Young Gurdon had, in the meantime, been sent to Bridgewater, Mass. to reside with his aunt, Mrs. Saltonstall, and he there entered upon a course of study under the tutelage of the Rev. Daniel Huntington. Mr. Hubbard states that he took no interest in books, was backward in his studies and was miserable and discontented. As he constantly pleaded to be allowed to return to his

parents, it was decided to have him do so, and about the first of May, he rejoined his family and accompanied them to Montreal. On arriving there, his father learned that he could not obtain a license to practise law, until he had resided in the Dominion for five years, so was compelled to content himself with clerical work which produced but a meagre income.

Young Gurdon, with twenty-five cents of borrowed capital, embarked in traffic. Of the farmers, he bought butter, poultry, cheese, and other commodities, these he peddled throughout the town; in this manner he accumulated about one hundred dollars, that went into the family treasury. From that time, all through his life, he contributed from his means, to the support of his mother and sisters.

The following spring, being then fourteen years of age, he procured a position in a hardware store, where he slept on the counter and was given his board in pay for his services. It was during his service as a clerk in this store that he made the acquaintance of William Matthews, who was employed by John Jacob Astor.

Mr. Matthews had been commissioned to engage clerks and Canadian voyagers for service of the American Fur Company in the Indian country, and also to purchase goods for the Indian trade. To him, young Hubbard applied for a position as a clerk. Mr. Matthews hesitated to employ one so young, and Mr. Hubbard's parents were unwilling to have him engage in so perilous an enterprise. However, his persistency finally won a reluctant consent from both, and he was engaged for a term of five years at an annual salary of one hundred and twenty dollars. Fifty dollars was advanced to him, which his mother expended for his outfit.

Mr. Hubbard says, "a part of my outfit consisted of a swallow-tailed coat and pants and vest, all of which were much too large for me, and were designed to be filled by my future growth."

On May 13, 1818, he says "I started for Lachine, where I arrived about nine o'clock in the morning and reported for duty. Later in the day, the expedition started on its way to Mackinac

Island. The boats were heavily laden, and were propelled by oars and poles, and their progress up the St. Lawrence River was necessarily slow.

At times, when rapids were to be overcome, three to five miles was a full day's journey. The men were fed exclusively upon pea soup and salt pork, with an extra allowance of hard biscuit on Sunday. The clerks messed by themselves, and their tables were supplied with salt pork and pea soup, and in addition they were allowed tea, sugar, hardbread, and such fresh meats as could be procured from time to time.

Breakfast was eaten at daybreak and soon after sunrise, the boats were under way. One hour was allowed at noon for dinner, and at sundown, camp was made for the night. A month was occupied in reaching Toronto, then a town of about three hundred inhabitants and was then called Little York.

At this point, ox-teams were employed to transport the goods and drag the boats through Young Street to Lake Simcoe. This portage occupied two weeks' time. From Lake Simcoe, they proceeded by the Not-ta-wa-sa-ga portage, thence down the river of that name into Lake Huron, which they coasted.

In the afternoon of July 3, they reached Goose Island and camped in sight of Michilimacinac—The Great Turtle, and on the following day, they landed on the east side of the island, at the foot of Robinson's Folly.

Closely interwoven with the history of Illinois and of our own city, is that of Mackinac Island. Situated as it is, at the head of Lake Michigan and at the entrance to Lake Huron, it seems to have been designed by nature as the rendezvous of the early explorers and fur-traders. It was from this place that Tonty in 1679 started to meet LaSalle, after the disastrous trip of the schooner Griffin, and it was from there that LaSalle started for the Illinois Country and the relief of Tonty in the fall of 1680.

It was to Mackinac that Tonty fled when pursued by the Iroquois after the massacre at Fort Crève Cœur and it was to that island that Marquette was hastening, when, on May 19, 1675, overcome by sickness and fatigue, he halted at the mouth

of the Marquette River and there died, "thanking God that he was permitted to die in the wilderness, a missionary of the faith, and a member of the Jesuit brotherhood."

It was at Mackinac that John Jacob Astor established the headquarters of the American Fur Company in the closing years of the eighteenth century, and it was there that Mr. Hubbard began the life of an Indian trader in 1818, a life he followed exclusively for ten consecutive years.

Mr. Hubbard tells us that the village had at that time, a population of about five hundred people, mostly of Canadian French and mixed Indian blood. In addition to these, there were three or four companies of United States troops who garrisoned the fort located there. It was there that he made the acquaintance of John H. Kinzie, who was then a clerk in the offices of the American Fur Company and who later became a distinguished citizen of Chicago.

Here the traders employed by the American Fur Company, congregated during the summer months, bringing the furs collected at the several trading-posts, that extended from the British dominions on the north and the Missouri River on the west, to the white settlements in the south and east and reached all the Indian hunting-grounds.

During his stay on the island, Mr. Hubbard was detailed for service in the assorting-warehouse, where it was his duty to count and record the number and kinds of furs received from the various trading-posts. Union hours were unknown on the island at that time, the working-hours being from five o'clock in the morning to twelve noon, and from one to seven o'clock in the afternoon.

Very soon after reaching Mackinac and making their returns, the traders commenced to select their crews and prepare their outfits for their return to winter-quarters in the Indian country. Mr. Hubbard was assigned to the Fond-du-Lac brigade; but, learning that his father and brother had gone to St. Louis, he applied for and obtained a change of detail to the Illinois brigade. This arrangement, he says, caused an entire change in

his destiny. Instead of being located in the cold regions of the north, where the clerk, with whom he exchanged places, froze to death that winter, his lot was cast in the beautiful State of Illinois.

In the month of September, the Illinois brigade started in twelve boats in command of Antoine Deschamps, an old and experienced Indian-trader, who had for many years traded with the Indians on the Ohio and Illinois rivers, and had been in the employ of the American Fur Company from the date of its organization.

The boats progressed at the rate of about fifty miles a day, under oars; when the wind was fair, square sails were hoisted, and by their aid they were enabled to make seventy to seventy-five miles per day. If the wind proved too heavy, or blew too strongly ahead, an entrance into some river or creek was sought, or, if caught by a storm before a shelter could be reached, the boats were run ashore, unloaded, and hauled upon the beach, out of reach of the surf. The journey around Lake Michigan occupied about twenty days.

Mr. Hubbard says that nothing of interest occurred until they reached the Marquette River, where Father Marquette had died about one hundred and forty years before. Here they saw the remains of a red cedar cross, erected at the time of his death, to mark his burial-place. The cross was about three feet above the ground, and in a falling position. They reset it, leaving it only about two feet above the ground. As it was covered by the drifting sands of the following winter, doubtless no white man ever saw it afterward. Though Marquette's remains had been removed to the mission at Point St. Ignace, the place was considered sacred by the voyagers, who in passing paid reverence to it, by kneeling and making the sign of the cross.

On the evening of September 30, the brigade reached the mouth of the Calumet River, then known as the Little Calumet, and crossing to the west side of it, camp was made for the night. On the following morning, the last twelve miles of the lake journey was completed.

Mr. Hubbard thus graphically describes his first sight of Chicago: "Arriving at Douglas Grove, where the prairie could be seen through the oak woods, I landed, and climbing a tree gazed in admiration on the first prairie I had ever seen. The waving grass, intermingling with a rich profusion of wild flowers, was the most beautiful sight I had ever gazed upon. In the distance, the grove of Blue Island loomed up, beyond it, the timber on the Des Plaines River; while to give animation to the scene, a herd of wild deer appeared and a pair of red foxes emerged from the grass within gunshot of me.

"Looking north, I saw the whitewashed buildings of Fort Dearborn, sparkling in the sunshine, our boats, with flags flying and oars keeping time to the cheering boat-song. I was spell-bound and amazed at the beautiful scene before me.

"I took the trail leading to the Fort, and on my arrival found our party camped on the north side of the river, near what is now State Street. A soldier ferried me across the river in a canoe, and thus I made my first entry into Chicago, October 1, 1818."

John Kinzie resided on the north bank of the river, east of Rush Street, and to him Mr. Hubbard presented a letter of introduction from his son, John H. Kinzie, and was warmly welcomed and invited to visit the family and make their house his home, while he remained in Chicago.

The Kinzie family then residing in Chicago, consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Kinzie, their eldest daughter, Mrs. Helm, their youngest daughter, Maria, afterward the wife of Maj.-Gen. David Hunter of the United States Army, and their son Robert A., afterward a paymaster in the United States Army. Mr. Kinzie's house was a log cabin, with a rude piazza and fronted the river, directly opposite Fort Dearborn.

Mr. Hubbard says, "I was invited to breakfast with them the next morning and gladly accepted. As I sat down to the neat and well-ordered table for the first time since I left my father's house, memories of home and those dear to me, forced themselves upon me and I could not suppress my tears. But for the kindness of Mrs. Kinzie, I should have beaten a retreat. She

saw my predicament and said, 'I know just how you feel, and know more about you than you think; I am going to be a mother to you, if you will let me. Just come with me a moment.' She led me into an adjoining room and left me to bathe my eyes in cold water. When I returned to the table, I noticed that they had suspended eating, awaiting me. I said to Mrs. Kinzie, 'You reminded me so much of my mother, I could not help crying; my last meal with her was when I left Montreal, and since that time, I have never sat at a table with ladies, and this seems like home to me.'"

In addition to the Fort and government buildings connected therewith, a house of hewn logs stood, twelve hundred or more feet from the road, and back of it, flowed the Chicago River, that as late as 1827, emptied into Lake Michigan at a point known as The Pines, a clump of stunted pine trees, on the sand hills about a mile south of the Fort. On the bank of the river, directly east of this house, and distant about four hundred feet, stood a store-house of round logs, owned by the American Fur Company and occupied by its agent, John Crafts, who erected it. These with the addition of a log cabin, near the present mouth of the Drainage Canal, then called Hardscrabble; a cabin on the north side of the river, occupied by Antoine Ouilmette; and the house of Mr. Kinzie, comprised all the buildings within the present limits of Cook County. What is now known as the North Branch was then called the River Guarie, so named after the first trader who followed LaSalle.

Fort Wayne, Indiana, was the nearest post-office. The mail was carried by soldiers on foot and was received once a month.

After passing a few days in Chicago, the brigade proceeded on its way through Mud Lake and the Des Plaines down the Illinois River. Opposite the mouth of Bureau River and about a mile above the present site of the town of Hennepin, the first trading-post was located, and to this post young Hubbard was assigned as a clerk, but was allowed to accompany Mr. Deschamps to St. Louis where he hoped to meet his father and brother.

One of Mr. Hubbard's most distinguished characteristics was his great personal bravery. He once told me that he did not know the sensation of fear, as he had never experienced it. I remember reading to him an account of a robbery in Montana, where a stage-coach, occupied by ten men had been stopped and robbed by two highwaymen. "What!" said he, "ten men robbed by two? I wish I had been there and had Bob Kinzie with me."

It was to this characteristic, coupled with his wonderful nerve, that Hon. Grant Goodrich, in a memorial paper read before this Society, referred, saying: "Though eighty-two years old, without anesthetics of any kind, or anyone to hold his hands, the steady nerve and self-control, that so distinguished him in his earlier years, enabled him simply to lie down and have his eye cut out."

On this trip, his fearlessness led to an altercation with a young brave that might have resulted in the death of all the members of the brigade. As they rounded the point of the lake above Peoria, they discovered that old Fort Clark was on fire and that the Indians to the number of about two hundred were engaged in a war-dance. The boats were stopped and the Indian noticing young Hubbard, accused him of being an American and drawing from his belt a number of scalps, flourished them before him, telling him that they were the scalps of Americans, and finally producing the scalp of a woman, he slapped him in the face with it.

This so thoroughly angered young Hubbard that he seized a gun and aiming directly at the Indian fired. One of the men who had been left in the boat with him, knocked the gun aside and thus saved the Indian's life. This incident was, afterward, the cause of a visit from two chiefs, Waba and Shau-be-nee, who came, they said, to see the brave young American. Waba had shortly before that lost a son of about the same age and so in accordance with the Indian custom, he adopted young Hubbard, giving him the name of Che-mo-co-mon-ess, the Little American.

The name of Shau-be-nee is familiar in the history of Illinois and Mr. Hubbard thus described his appearance at that time: "Shau-be-nee was then about twenty-five years of age, and was, I thought, the finest looking man I had ever seen. He was fully six feet tall, finely proportioned, and with a countenance expressive of intelligence, firmness, and kindness. He was one of Tecumseh's aids at the battle of the Thames and was at his side when Tecumseh was shot. Afterward, he with Billy Caldwell, the Sauganash, withdrew their support from the British and espoused the cause of the Americans.

During the Black-Hawk War, he was untiring in his efforts to notify the white settlers in Dupage, Grundy, and LaSalle counties of their danger. He rode night and day, often in great peril, and by his timely warning and counsel saved the lives of many settlers.

Having established trading-posts every sixty miles, with a full stock of goods, and placed them in charge of a trader and clerk, Mr. Deschamps, with one boat started for St. Louis, young Hubbard accompanying him. St. Louis was reached November 6, and there Mr. Hubbard found his father and brother, with whom he was allowed to remain about two weeks, when he started on his return journey up the river, and reached his trading-post about the middle of December.

During this winter, he learned the Indian language and became proficient in hunting and wood-craft. His clothing then and for the subsequent years of his life, as an Indian trader, consisted of a buckskin hunting-shirt, or a blue capote, belted in at the waist, with a sash or buckskin belt, in which was carried a knife and sheath, a tomahawk and a tobacco-pouch made of the skin of some animal. In the pouch was carried a flint and steel and a piece of punk.

Underneath his outside garments, he wore a calico shirt, breechcloth and buckskin leggins, on his feet neips and moccasins and sometimes in winter, he wore a red knit cap on his head. He allowed his hair to grow long and usually went bareheaded. When traveling in winter, he carried and sometimes wore a blanket.

With the approach of spring, came Mr. Deschamps on his return trip to Mackinac and two days afterward, the brigade started on its long journey. About a week was spent in Chicago repairing the boats and putting them in condition for the more serious journey of coasting Lake Michigan. About April 20, they left Chicago and, on arriving at the mouth of Grand River, they halted to witness the Indian ceremony of the Feast of the Dead that was held annually during the full of the moon, in the month of May.

Mr. Hubbard says: "The Feast of the Dead had already commenced and for five or six days we were witnesses to the strange and solemn ceremonies. At its close, we were informed that the fall previous, an Indian, in a drunken quarrel, had killed one of the sons of a Manistee chief and would on the following day deliver himself up to suffer punishment, according to the Indian custom. This information proved to be true, and I witnessed the grandest and most thrilling incident of my life.

"The murderer was a Canadian Indian who had no relations among the Manistees, but had married a maiden of that tribe, and agreed to become one of them. As was customary, all of his earnings belonged to his father-in-law until after the birth of his first child, when he could retain his earnings for the benefit of his family. At the time, he committed the crime, he had several children, and was very poor, possessing nothing but his meagre wearing apparel and a few traps.

"Knowing that his life would be taken unless he could ransom it with furs or other articles of value, he determined to depart at night with his family and secretly make his way to the headwaters of the Muskegon River, where he hoped to secure furs, sufficient to satisfy the demands of the chief. According to the Indian custom, if he failed to satisfy the father and family of the murdered man, either by ransom or the sacrifice of his own life, they could demand of his wife's brothers, what he had failed to give. He consulted with one of them, told them of his purpose and designated a particular location on the Muskegon, where he could be found if it became necessary for him to return.

Having completed his arrangements, he made his escape and arrived safely at his destination.

"After the burial of his son, the chief consulted with his family as to what course they should pursue to revenge the dead. They knew the murderer was too poor to pay their demands and so determined upon his death. Not being able to find him, they made a demand upon the brothers of his wife, who were also unable to satisfy the claim. The younger brother, however, knowing his whereabouts, sent word to the chief that he would go in search of the murderer, and if he failed to produce him, would give his own life in his stead. This being acceptable, without divulging the secret of his brother-in-law's hiding-place, he started to find him, which he finally did.

"The winter had been one of unusually deep snow, and the spring one of great floods. The bears had kept in their dens, and the other fur-bearing animals had not been found, so that the winter's hunt had proved unsuccessful: When the brother-in-law reached them, he found the family almost perishing from starvation. Together, they descended to the main river where the brother-in-law left them for his return home, the murderer having promised to report, at the mouth of Grand River during the Feast of the Dead, which promise he faithfully kept.

"Soon after sunrise, the news spread through the camp, that he was coming. The chief hastily selected a spot in a valley between the sand hills in which he placed his family in readiness to receive him, while we traders sought the surrounding sand hills, that we might be able to witness all that should occur.

"Presently, we heard the monotonous thump of the Indian drum, and soon thereafter, the mournful voice of the Indian, chanting his own death-song, and then, we beheld him marching with his wife and children, slowly and in single file, to the place selected for his execution. When he reached a spot, near where the chief sat, he placed the drum on the ground, and his wife and children seated themselves on mats, which had been provided for them. He then addressed the chief, saying, 'I, in a drunken moment, stabbed your son, being provoked to it, by his accusing

me of being a coward and calling me an old woman. I fled to the marshes of the Muskegon hoping that the Great Spirit would favor me in the hunt, so that I could pay you for your lost son. I was not successful. Here is the knife with which I killed him; by it, I wish to die. Save my wife and children. I am done.'

"The chief received the knife, and, handing it to his eldest son, said, 'Kill him.' The son advanced, and placing his left hand on the shoulder of his victim, made two or three feints with the knife, then plunged it into his breast, to the handle and immediately withdrew it. Not a murmur was heard from the Indian or his wife and children, not a word was spoken by those assembled to witness. All nature was silent, broken only by the singing of the birds. Every eye was turned upon the victim, who stood motionless with his eyes firmly fixed upon his executioner, and calmly received the blow, without the appearance of the slightest tremor. For a few moments, he stood erect, the blood gushing from the wound at every pulsation; then his knees began to quake; his eyes and face assumed an expression of death; and he sank upon the sand.

"During all this time, the wife and children sat perfectly motionless, gazing upon the husband and father. Not a sigh or murmur, escaping their lips until life was extinct, when they threw themselves upon his dead body, lying in a pool of blood, in grief and lamentations, which brought tears to the eyes of the traders, and caused a murmur of sympathy to run through the multitude of Indians.

"Turning to Mr. Deschamps, down whose cheeks the tears were trickling, I said, 'Why did you not save that noble Indian? A few blankets and shirts and a little cloth, would have done it.' 'Oh! my boy,' he replied, 'we should have done it. It was wrong and thoughtless in us. What a scene we have witnessed.'

"Still, the widowed wife and children were clinging to the dead body in useless grief and tears. The chief and his family sat motionless for ten or fifteen minutes, evidently regretting what had been done. Then he arose, approached the body, and in a trembling voice said: 'Woman, stop your weeping; your hus-

band was a brave man, and like a brave, was not afraid to die as the rules of our nation demanded. We adopt you and your children in place of my son ; our lodges are open to you ; live with any of us ; we will treat you like our own children ; you shall have our love and protection.'

"'Che-qui-ock'—that is right—was heard from the assembled Indians, and the tragedy was ended.

"That scene is indelibly stamped on my mind, never to be forgotten." I may add, that Mr. Hubbard never spoke of it, without exhibiting intense emotion.

They reached Mackinac about the middle of the month, and here Mr. Hubbard heard of the death of his father, and that his mother and family had returned to New England. Feeling that he should be with his mother, he tendered his resignation, which the company refused to accept.

In his second year of service, being then seventeen years of age, he was given the charge of an outfit and assigned to the Muskegon River. Jaques DufRAIN, an experienced trader, who was well acquainted with the Michigan Indians accompanied him as assistant and adviser.

They left Mackinac in the company of the Illinois brigade in the latter part of October. With but three men to row the boat, and buffeted by storms and adverse winds, winter found them still coasting the lake. He says, "Thus with a heavily laden canoe and adverse winds, often in great peril, sometimes shipping water and narrowly escaping wreck, suffering from cold, and worn with toil, we entered the Muskegon River about the tenth of December and found the lake frozen. The weather was very cold and the coast Indians had left for their hunting-grounds in the interior."

As it was impossible for them to reach their destination, about sixty miles up the river, it was decided to occupy an old abandoned trading-house, which they found on a point of the lake, and there make themselves as comfortable as possible

It was determined that DufRAIN and the two voyagers, with an assortment of goods should go in search of the Indians, while young

Hubbard should remain in care of the remaining stock of goods.

With a stock of provisions consisting only of corn and a small quantity of flour, and such game as he might be able to procure, he felt in no fear of hunger. For a week or more he procured rabbits and squirrels in abundance; but then came a heavy fall of snow, after which, he could find no game and so concluded to remain in the cabin, keep up a warm fire, and content himself with corn soup. Later, he was enabled to supply himself with fish, that he procured by cutting a hole in the ice, and with an artificial bait, luring the fish within reach of his spear.

Mr. Hubbard says, "Every night a wolf came and devoured the remnants of the fish, that I had thrown out. I could see him through the cracks in the house, and could easily have shot him, but he was my only companion, and I laid awake nights, awaiting his coming. Thus I lived for thirty long, dreary, winter days, solitary and alone. Never once during that time seeing a human being, and devoured with anxiety as to the fate of Dufrain and his men, whom I feared had met with some serious mishap, if indeed they had not been murdered."

Can one imagine anything more pathetic than this seventeen-year-old boy, waiting, night after night, for the return of a wolf, that his eyes might be rejoiced by the sight of some living thing?

Another expedition was deemed necessary and upon this Mr. Hubbard determined to go. On the following day, the party started, leaving one man in charge of the cabin. Mr. Hubbard for the first time walked on snow-shoes and carried a pack upon his back. This expedition was one of many hardships and much suffering. The party was divided and Mr. Hubbard and Dufrain proceeded together.

For many days they were lost in the wilderness. A heavy snow storm was encountered, provisions were exhausted, and they were compelled to abandon their packs in an effort to save their lives. Thorn-apples, dug up from under the snow, afforded their only food, and finally reaching the Muskegon River, they were compelled to ford it at the rapids, where the water was waist deep, and full of floating ice.

Dufrain being overcome by hunger and fatigue, finally sank to the ground and refused to make another effort to save his life. Young Hubbard was compelled to leave him.

In speaking of this trip, he says, "Finding it to be impossible to arouse Dufrain, I dug away the snow, wrapped him in his blanket, with mine over him and left him. I started forward, conscious that I myself might soon be in the same condition. I felt no hunger, but was very weak; the perspiration ran from every pore and at times everything seemed to waver before me with momentary darkness. New tracks and the barking of a dog, told me that I was nearing a lodge and gave me new strength to advance. Soon I was gladdened by the sight of the lodge and in a few minutes more, was seated on a bearskin within. I told the squaw that I was hungry and had not eaten for four days and nights; she threw a handful of pounded corn into a kettle of hot water and gave me a small quantity to drink, and this, she repeated at intervals, allowing me to sleep between times."

He says that he rested until the moon rose at midnight when, in company with an Indian boy, he returned for Dufrain. They reached him in the course of an hour and found him apparently lifeless, though still warm.

After much effort, they aroused him and succeeded in getting him to the lodge, just as the sun rose. For ten days, they remained in the Indian lodge, and then, upon a sled of his own construction, with the assistance of the Indian boy, he dragged Dufrain through the forest to the cabin on Muskegon Lake, arriving there, after three days of most severe toil. Dufrain did not again leave the cabin until spring; he was then carried to a canoe to start for Mackinac and died before the close of the day.

Mr. Hubbard's power of endurance is further illustrated by the following incidents. In the month of March, 1823, he started in the morning from the Big Woods, located on Fox River in Du Page County, west of Chicago, and walked to his trading-house near Hennepin. He swam across the Illinois River and reached the house about dark.

The distance walked that day was seventy-five miles, in a direct line, according to the present survey. He says, "Some have doubted that I could have walked so great a distance, but I was then young and in my prime, and had long had the reputation among Indians of being a very rapid traveler, and had in consequence been named by them, Pa-pa-ma-ta-be—The Swift Walker."

Two years later, he accompanied a party of Indians to the Kankakee River, he being on horseback, and they on foot. He says, "We progressed very pleasantly until we reached a small stream on the prairie that had overflowed its banks and upon which a new covering of ice had formed during the night, leaving running water between the two coverings of ice. The upper ice was not strong enough for a man to walk on, but the Indians laid down and slid themselves across with little difficulty. I rode my horse to the stream, and reaching forward with my tomahawk broke the ice ahead of him, he walking on the under ice until he reached the middle of the stream, when his hind feet broke through, the girth gave away, and the saddle slipped off behind carrying me with it.

"I fell into the water and was carried by the current rapidly down the stream between the upper and lower coverings of ice. I made two attempts to regain my feet, but the current was so swift and the space so narrow, I could not break through the ice.

"I had almost given up hope, when my hand struck a willow bush near the bank and arrested my rapid progress. At the same time, I stood up and bumping the ice with my head broke through. I recovered my horse and saddle and returned to my trading-house, with no worse results than wet clothing and a slightly bruised head."

Let us now turn from the experiences of the boy, to the achievements of the man.

Mr. Hubbard was twenty-one years of age when his contract with the fur-company expired. He reëngaged for a term of two years at a salary of thirteen hundred dollars a year, and was assigned to the command of the Illinois brigade, this position old age had compelled Mr. Deschamps to relinquish.

He now put into operation a plan, that he had frequently urged upon Mr. Deschamps, that of unloading the boats on their arrival at Chicago and sinking them in the slough to prevent their loss by prairie-fires. The goods and furs, he proposed to transport on pack-horses to and from the Indians, and thus avoid the long and tedious passage by boats through Mud Lake and the Des Plaines River, as well as the more serious work of transporting the goods, on the backs of men, to the Indian hunting-grounds.

He had already established a direct path or trail from his Iroquois trading-post to Danville, and he now extended it, south from Danville, and north to Chicago, thus fully opening Hubbard's Trail from Chicago to a point about one hundred and fifty miles south of Danville, and along the trail he established trading-posts.

This trail became the regularly traveled route between Chicago and Danville and points beyond, and was designated on the old maps as Hubbard's Trail. In the winter of 1833-4, the Illinois general assembly ordered that a state-road be located from Vincennes to Chicago and that mile-stones be placed thereon. From Danville to Chicago, Hubbard's Trail was selected as the most direct and favorable route.

At the expiration of his two years' contract with the fur-company, he became a special partner, and at a later period, he purchased the entire interest of the fur-company in the Illinois country.

In 1828, he built a store at Danville and established his headquarters there. This year, he went on horseback, and alone to Detroit, without seeing a white settlement until he reached Ypsilanti, where there were a few log houses.

He had now become an extensive trader in farm products and had contracts for furnishing beef and pork to the troops at Fort Dearborn. He continued his annual visits to Mackinac and during his life as a trader, made twenty-six trips to and from that island, coasting Lake Michigan in an open boat.

He was present when Alexis St. Martin was shot and "extended to him first aid." St. Martin was accidently wounded while in

the fur company's retail store at Mackinac; the entire charge of shot entering his body. Mr. Hubbard cared for him until the arrival of the fort-surgeon, Dr. William Beaumont, who thought the wound fatal. On the following day, finding his patient still alive, the doctor decided upon a course of treatment that would leave the wound open, and enable him to watch the action of the food in the man's stomach. In this, he was successful, and St. Martin's case was one of the most celebrated ones in surgical annals, and as late as the year 1860, he was exhibited at the hospitals throughout the country.

In the winter of 1829, Mr. Hubbard killed a large number of hogs, but not having received the barrels in which to pack them, he piled the pork upon the river bank, near where Kirk's factory now stands, and preserved it in that manner, until the barrels arrived in the spring. Thus was founded the immense packing interests for which the Chicago of to-day is distinguished, the world over.

In the summer of 1830, he, for the first time, returned to the east, to visit his family and on his return brought with him two sisters, who resided with him until their marriage.

In the spring of 1831, he was married to Elinor Berry of Urbana, Ohio, who died in Chicago in 1838. In 1843, he was married to Miss Mary Ann Hubbard, who is present with us this evening, daughter of Ahira Hubbard and Serena Tucker, of Middleborough, Mass., who came to Chicago in 1836.

On the breaking out of the Blackhawk war in 1832, he furnished provisions, ammunition, and transportation-wagons for Col. Isaac S. Moore's Vermilion County Regiment, in which he served as captain and led the advance. He, afterward, organized a company of scouts, with which he served until it was disbanded.

In a paper read before the Pioneers of Chicago, the Hon. Henry W. Blodgett thus describes Mr. Hubbard as he saw him at that time. "The picture of him, as he led his Vermilion rangers up before the old fort, will ever remain in my memory. I think without exception, he was the nearest to my ideal of a frontier soldier, of anyone I have ever seen. Splendid in phy-

sique, six feet and something more in height, he rode a splendid horse, and dressed in just enough of the frontier costume, to make his figure a picturesque one. He wore buckskin leggings, fringed with red and blue and a jaunty sort of hunting-cap. In a red sash about his waist was stuck, on one side a silver-handled hunting-knife, on the other, a richly mounted tomahawk. His saddle and horse-accoutrements were elegant, I might say, fantastic, and altogether he made a figure ever to be remembered."

Mr. Blodgett further says, "I may be allowed to mention a debt, which the State of Illinois owes to Mr. Hubbard, which, I think, has never been duly accredited to him. Mr. Hubbard was in the Legislature of this State when the question of locating the terminus of the Illinois and Michigan Canal was before it. The governor of the State, had sent some commissioners to examine the territory through which it was proposed to construct the canal, and some of them seemed strongly inclined to recommend the mouth of the Calumet River as its northern terminus, as it was thought it would be cheaper to follow up the Calumet, to what is known as the Sag, and thence down the valley of the Des Plaines River, than to cut through the hard ground between the south branch of the Chicago River and the Des Plaines.

After hearing the arguments upon this point, Mr. Hubbard took a map, and called the attention of the members to the fact that the mouth of the Calumet River, is within a few hundred yards of the Indiana state-line, and suggested that it was expected that wherever the canal terminated, a great city would grow up, and pertinently asked, whether it was desirable that the coming city, at the terminus of the canal, should be, as much of it in the State of Indiana as in Illinois, when the entire expense of constructing the canal would devolve upon our State. This practical business view of the question, settled it, and the mouth of the Chicago River was made the terminus instead of the mouth of the Calumet.

So you will see that the State of Illinois is indebted to the sagacity of Gurdon S. Hubbard, for locating this great city, where Illinois gets the principal benefit of it."

Mr. Hubbard represented Vermilion County in the 8th general assembly during the winter of 1832-3. At this session, he introduced a bill for the construction of the Illinois-and-Michigan Canal, which passed the house, but was defeated in the senate. He then substituted a bill for a railroad which was defeated by the casting-vote of the presiding-officer.

He attended every session of the legislature thereafter and urged the passage of the canal-bill, until it was finally accomplished. He, in company with William F. Thornton and William B. Archer, were appointed the first board of canal commissioners, and in 1836, at a celebration of the beginning of work, he dug the first spadeful of dirt.

At this celebration, my father, the late Richard J. Hamilton, one of the orators of the occasion made the prediction that there were persons then living who would live to see Chicago a city of fifty thousand inhabitants, for which prediction he was interrupted by shouts of laughter and ridicule, and was told that he was crazy.

In 1834, Mr. Hubbard moved from Danville to Chicago, and erected at the southwest corner of LaSalle and South Water streets, the first large brick building. Because of its size and permanent construction, the building was called Hubbard's Folly.

By act of the legislature in 1835, the town of Chicago was incorporated with Gurdon S. Hubbard, John H. Kinzie, Ebenezer Goodrich, John K. Boyer, and John S. C. Hogan as trustees.

He was a director of the Chicago branch of the State Bank of Illinois, was one of the incorporators of the Chicago Hydraulic Company that built its pumping-station at the foot of Lake street, and supplied portions of the south and west sides with water. In 1848, he became one of the organizers of the Chicago Board of Trade.

In 1836, he organized the firm of Hubbard & Co. his partners being Henry G. and Elijah K. Hubbard. This firm did a large forwarding and commission business and established the Eagle Line of steamers and vessels, between Buffalo and the upper lakes. This year, he wrote for the Ætna Insurance Co. the first insurance policy ever issued in Chicago, and established an insurance agency, which he conducted until 1868.

In 1835, he packed three thousand five hundred hogs and for many years thereafter he was known as the largest packer in the West; he continued this business until his large plant was destroyed by fire in 1868.

In later years, in connection with A. T. Spencer he established a line of steamers to Lake Superior, conspicuous among them being the *Superior* and *Lady Elgin*, both of which were lost. After the destruction of his packing-house, he organized a company for the direct importation of tea from China. The great fire of 1871 destroyed this enterprise and crippled him financially, and from that time he retired from active business.

Early in life, Mr. Hubbard embraced the Christian faith and became a communicant of the Episcopal Church. In company with John H. Kinzie and wife, and others, he organized the St. James Episcopal Church and was, for many years one of its officers.

In later years, he aided in the formation of the Reformed Episcopal Church, of which he was a member at the time of his death.

Politically, he was a Whig and in the Log-Cabin Hard-Cider campaign of 1840, he with John H. Kinzie, George W. Dole, and others, was selected as a delegate to the Whig convention, which was held at Springfield. They took with them a full-rigged ship, which was mounted on wheels, emblematical, not only, of the Ship of State but of the great commercial capital of this State, which they then believed, Chicago was destined to become.

After the formation of the Republican party, Mr. Hubbard transferred his allegiance to that party, and with all his energy advocated its principles and worked for its success. He had long been a personal friend and admirer of Lincoln, and by his efforts contributed largely to that gentleman's nomination. He was one of the committee that erected the Wigwam, at the southeast corner of Lake and Market streets, the building in which Mr. Lincoln was nominated for the presidency, in May, 1860. Associated with Mr. Hubbard on that committee were Charles N. Holden, Peter Page, Edward Ransom, and Sylvester Lind.

At the breaking out of the civil war, he gave freely of his time, and contributed largely of his means in raising and equipping the troops and was foremost in every enterprise organized by the citizens to aid the government and preserve the Union.

Such is a brief sketch of the career of one of Chicago's earliest and greatest pioneers.

For almost seventy years, he was a resident of our State and city and during all that time he so lived that he was honored and beloved by all who knew him, and when on September 14, 1886, at the age of eighty-four years, he sank peacefully to rest, he left behind him, the honorable record of a well-spent life.

I conclude by again quoting Judge Goodrich, who says, "There are few of the numerous veins of commerce and wealth-producing industries, that draw to this pulsating heart of the Great West, that boundless agricultural and mineral wealth, which through iron arteries and water-craft is distributed to half a world, that have not felt the inspiration of his genius and been quickened by his enterprise and energy."

"Those who believe that in the world's coming history, its crowned heroes and benefactors are to be those who win the bloodless victories of peace, and by acts of self-sacrifice and beneficence, scatter widest the blessings of Christian civilization, will hold these men, and Gurdon S. Hubbard as a prince among them, in highest honor and esteem."

MR. PRESIDENT: On behalf of Mrs. Hubbard, I present to you this Memorial Tablet and request that you receive it and give it a place in your Society's collection. It is the work of Mrs. Julia Bracken Wendt, and is considered by Mr. Hubbard's family and friends, to be a very faithful reproduction of his features, as well as a most commendable specimen of the sculptor's art.

At the close of Mr. Hamilton's address, Fernando Jones arose in the audience and spoke as follows:—

MR. PRESIDENT: Perhaps it may not be deemed out of place for one who knew Mr. Hubbard, intimately, for over three score years, to speak a few words upon this occasion.

I join with Mr. Hamilton in his appreciation of the character of Mr. Hubbard as a thorough business man as well as a brave one under the most trying circumstances; but his most distinguishing characteristic was not mentioned. In early times, it was not deemed disreputable to impose upon the savages. The government did it constantly and the practice was followed by the officials and traders, generally.

Among all the men who were connected with the fur-trade, I recall but one other than Mr. Hubbard who never cheated or imposed upon the Indians. In buying their furs or selling them such goods as they required, he was as scrupulously honest as with his neighbors or intimate friends.

I am proud to remember him and glad to offer this tribute to his memory.

At the conclusion of Mr. Jones' remarks, President Head expressed the sincere thanks of the Historical Society to Mrs. Hubbard for the Memorial, and its grateful appreciation of her noble gift, and the Society's thanks to Mr. Hamilton for his interesting address, and requested of him the manuscript for preservation and publication by the Society.

Mr. Head then invited the audience to adjourn to the floor where the Memorial Tablet was to be unveiled by Master Gurdon Hubbard Hamilton. When as many persons as the gallery of the Main Hall would accommodate had found place there, young Master Hamilton released the silken cord that bound the flag, and the stars and stripes fell in graceful folds from the tablet, disclosing the striking likeness, wrought in bronze by Julia Bracken Wendt, of Hubbard the Pioneer.

After the spontaneous applause which greeted the unveiling had subsided, Rev. E. M. Williams, the son-in-law of Mr. and Mrs. G. S. Hubbard, read the following poem, composed for the occasion by Prof. Horace Spencer Fiske, of the University of Chicago, who was unable to be present at the unveiling:

IN MEMORY OF
GURDON SALTONSTALL HUBBARD

1802—1818—1886

In boat-songs of the daring voyageurs
He caught the pæans of a mighty mart;
In rushing waves along these wind-swept shores
He felt the beating of swift Commerce's heart;
The flower-bright prairie to his inward eye
Rustled in gold to feed the million's need;
And silent trails he followed till the sky
Revealed vast streets alive with Traffic's roar.
For faith was in his soul and cleared his sight;
And strength was his, as of the oak he blazed;
And largeness, like the generous sky that raised
Its roof above him; and a love of right
That made this man a man of peace and might.



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H87 Biographical sketch of
Gurdon Saltonstall Hubbard

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